

131ST LEGISLATURE SECOND REGULAR SESSION

The Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature begins January 3, 2024. Statutory adjournment is April 17, 2024.

USEFUL LINKS

- Maine Legislature Homepage: <http://legislature.maine.gov/>
- Maine Legislature YouTube Channels for Legislative Committees: <https://www.youtube.com/mainestatelegislature>
- Sign up to Testify and/or submit testimony here: <https://www.mainelegislature.org/testimony/>

Common Acronyms: AFA = Appropriations and Financial Affairs. HHS = Health and Human Services. OTP = Ought to Pass. OTP-AM = Ought to Pass as Amended. ONTP = Ought Not to Pass.

BILLS

Color code: **Orange font = Budget bill**; **Black font = Homelessness related bill**; **Blue font = Service related**; **Green font = Housing/Rental Assistance related**; **Purple font = General Assistance & Safety Net related bills**; **Pink font = Food security related bills**; **highlighted in yellow = passed the House and/or Senate**; **highlighted in green = signed by the Governor and will become Public Law**; **Red text = the bill is now dead.**

BUDGET BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
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HOMELESSNESS BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 1422	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to End Homelessness and Assist Students Who Are Homeless by Establishing a Housing Voucher Program and Providing Site-based Housing Services	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – CARRIED OVER	This bill establishes a housing voucher program for homeless students under the authority of the Maine State Housing Authority and appropriates one-time funding of \$2 million in fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The bill directs the Maine State Housing Authority to identify 3 sites in Maine to be used for a site-based housing program and appropriates one-time funding of \$3.5 million in fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25 to the Department of Health and Human Services to support the program.
LR 2714	Rep A Mastraccio	An Act to Support Shelters for the Unhoused	PASSED Legislative Council Appeal	\$10 million for all shelters using the regular funding formula.
LR 2767	Rep C Madigan	An Act to Improve Funding for Homeless Shelters	PASSED Legislative Council Appeal	\$2.5 million for low-barrier shelters.
LR 2932	Rep. G Lookner	An Act to Prohibit Certain Municipalities from Enforcing Moratoria on Emergency Shelters	PASSED Legislative Council Appeal	

SERVICE BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 328	Sen. Trey Stewart	An Act to Improve Mental Health in Maine	HHS Committee Tabled at 5/16 Work Session – Carried over	This bill brings MaineCare regulations into alignment with Dartmouth Assertive Community Treatment Scale fidelity items, ensuring high-quality, evidence based Assertive



				Community Treatment (ACT) services for Maine residents with psychotic disorders and high needs.
LD 540	Rep. Melanie Sachs	An Act to Establish Peer Respite Centers for Adults with Mental Health Challenges in Maine	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill requires the department to establish through contracts 2 peer respite centers in the State for persons 18 years of age or older. The centers must provide 24-hour intentional peer support to persons in need of mental health services on a voluntary, short-term basis.
LD 599	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to Provide Support Services for a Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Persons	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill provides ongoing funding for support services for a transitional housing program in Portland.
LD 1633	Sen. Pinny Beebe-Center	An Act to Establish a Community-based Reentry Program in All Department of Corrections Facilities	Additional Work Session on 5/24 – Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee – Carried Over	This bill creates a community-based reentry program administered by a community based organization at each correctional facility operated by the Department of Corrections. The program is a peer-supported program that provides individualized reentry plans to incarcerated individuals starting from 2 years prior to an individual's release, involving multiple meetings to determine the individual's education, job training, substance use disorder treatment, housing and other needs subsequent to release and follow-up meetings after release to support the individual's reentry into the community and to reduce or prevent recidivism. This bill also creates the Peer Reentry Review Board, which oversees, advises, studies data and makes recommendations to the community-based reentry program and reports to the Commissioner of Corrections and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over criminal justice and public safety matters.
LR 2845	Sen. R Bennett	An Act to Ensure the Financial Stability of Behavioral Health Service and Housing Providers	PASSED Legislative Council Appeal	

HOUSING/RENTAL ASSISTANCE BILLS



Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 1074	Sen. Matthea Daughtry	An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund New Affordable Housing for Low-Income Households	Public Hearing on 4/25 - AFA Committee – Carried over	The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$100,000,000, will be used to build new affordable housing for low-income households through the construction of new structures and adaptive reuse of existing structures.
LD 226	Rep. Rebecca Millett	An Act to Address Maine’s Affordable Housing Crisis	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill provides one-time funds to MaineHousing in the amount of \$100,000,000 in fiscal year 2023-24 and in fiscal year 2024-25 (only these FYs) to increase affordable housing stock in the State.

LD 314	Sen. Craig Hickman	An Act to Establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Housing in Maine	Referred to Housing Committee – Carried over	This bill would establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Housing in Maine. The commission would be a quasi-independent agency funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development. Members of the commission would include housing advocates and organizations, policy makers, housing developers, housing experts, landlords and tenants. The commission would identify the hurdles to developing more housing units and recommend solutions to each branch of government.
LD 337	Rep. Cheryl Golek	An Act to Amend the Regulations of Manufactured Housing to Increase Affordable Housing	Referred to Housing Committee – Carried over	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would amend the regulation of manufactured housing to increase the amount of affordable housing.
LD 371	Sen. Jeffrey Timberlake	An Act to Address Certain Local Zoning Ordinances	State and Local Government Committee Divided Report – Carried over	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to address certain local zoning ordinances.
LD 387	Rep. Mark Blier	An Act to Promote Affordable Housing by Providing a Tax Exemption for Housing Choice Vouchers	Referred to Housing Committee – Carried over	This bill provides an income tax deduction for income received by a landlord as tenant based housing assistance payments in the form of Section 8 housing choice vouchers administered by the Maine State Housing Authority.
LD 721	Sen. Matthea Daughtry	An Act to Preserve Historic Buildings and Promote Affordable Housing	Referred to the Housing Committee – Carried over	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would enact provisions of law to preserve historic buildings and promote affordable housing.
LD 853	Rep. Benjamin Collings	RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to Housing	Referred to the Housing Committee – Carried over	This resolution proposes to amend the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to housing. Constitutional referendum - the municipal officers of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, at a statewide election held in the month of November following the passage of this resolution, to vote upon the ratification of the amendment proposed in this resolution by voting upon the following question: "Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to housing?"
LD 1294	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Implement Several Recommendations of the Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Land Use Regulations and Short-term Rentals	Referred to Housing Committee – Carried over	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would implement certain recommendations of the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Land Use Regulations and Short-term Rentals.
LD 1298	Rep. Charles Skold	An Act to Allow a Local Option Sales Tax on Short-term Lodging to Fund Affordable Housing	Referred to Taxation Committee – Carried over	This bill allows a municipality to impose a local option sales tax of 1% on short-term lodging that is subject to the state sales and use tax if approved by referendum of the voters in that municipality. The revenue from the local option sales tax must be distributed to the municipality imposing the local option sales tax. The

				distributed revenue must be used in municipal programs that support affordable housing development in that municipality, including rental assistance for lower income households or moderate-income households. Revenue received by a municipality may not be used to reduce or eliminate funding otherwise due the municipality under other provisions of law. The local option sales tax may not take effect before July 1, 2024.
LD 1490	Rep. Chris Kessler	An Act to Reduce Rental Housing Costs by Eliminating Additional Fees at or Prior to the Commencement of Tenancy	Judiciary Committee – Carried over	This bill provides that at or prior to the commencement of a tenancy, a landlord, the landlord's agent or a real estate broker may not require a tenant or prospective tenant to pay an amount in excess of the rent for the first full month of occupancy, a security deposit and the purchase and installation cost for a key and lock.
LD 1493	Rep. Raegan LaRoche	An Act to Increase Affordable Housing by Expanding Tax Increment Financing	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill authorizes the creation of Pine Tree Housing Zones to allow retained value resulting from a tax increment financing district in a municipality to be used anywhere in the municipality for the purposes of the purchase, rehabilitation or establishment of affordable and workforce housing in the municipality. The bill provides for a sales tax exemption for the associated purchasing of goods and services and electricity for a qualified project in a Pine Tree Housing Zone.
LD 1505	Rep. Kristen Cloutier	An Act to Amend the Maine Cooperative Affordable Housing Ownership Act	Work Session on 1/5 at 9:30am, Housing Committee	This bill amends the Maine Cooperative Affordable Housing Ownership Act to include group equity cooperatives. It also provides that a housing assistance program must be made reasonably available to residents of housing cooperatives.
LD 1540	Rep. Rebecca Millett	An Act to Create the Stable Home Fund Program	Emergency bill requiring 2/3's majority vote – failed 2/3's majority vote in the House but Passed in the Senate to be Placed on the Special Appropriations Table on 6/21. Sent back to the House for concurrence where it failed 2/3's needed for final passage – Carried over	This bill, which includes an emergency preamble and emergency clause, creates the Stable Home Fund and the Stable Home Fund Program within MaineHousing. The purpose of the program is to provide persons earning up to 60% of the median income for an area as defined by HUD with \$300 per month in rental assistance paid directly to the landlord for up to 24 months or until those persons secure housing by means of a housing voucher program administered by HUD under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, or secure a subsidized housing unit. The bill directs MaineHousing to administer the program except that MaineHousing may delegate the administration of the program and provide appropriate funding from the fund to a municipal housing authority with respect to eligible persons located within the municipal housing authority's jurisdiction.
LD 1672	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Establish an Affordable Housing Permitting Process	Public Hearing 1/5/24 at 9am – Housing Committee	This bill establishes the Affordable Housing Development Review Board under the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning in order to issue permits for the development of affordable housing and workforce housing.

LD 1673	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Encourage Affordable Housing and Mixed-use Development by Establishing a Thriving Corridors Program	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 1/12 – Housing Committee	This bill establishes the Thriving Corridors Program within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services in order to assist municipalities with technical support and funding to redevelop high-impact corridors near downtowns, village centers or crossroads into mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable neighborhoods by infilling and redeveloping underutilized land.
LD 1710	Rep. Cheryl Golek	An Act to Establish the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program and Amend the Laws Regarding Tenants and the Municipal General Assistance Program	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 5/26; Work Session 5/30; Work Session on 1/5 at 9:30am, Housing Committee	Sponsor Amendment amends the bill as follows: This amendment replaces the bill. This amendment requires the Maine State Housing Authority to establish and administer the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program. The program must include a rental assistance component to assist individuals with the cost of rent and a rental guarantee component to encourage landlords to work with the program and other rental assistance programs in the State. The amendment also creates the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program Fund under the Maine State Housing Authority to carry out the program. The bill appropriates \$16,000,000 of ongoing funds annually. The amendment makes it an unfair trade practice for a landlord to refuse to participate in a federal, state or local tenant-based rental assistance program.
LD 1721	Sen. Jill Duson	An Act to Create Transitional Housing Communities for Homeless Populations in the State	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 1/5 - Housing Committee	This bill creates the Transitional Housing Community Construction Program Fund under MaineHousing to create transitional housing communities, which are clusters of transitional housing dwelling units for homeless individuals and families to provide stability and to allow the individuals and families to transition to permanent housing. The bill directs that transitional housing communities be created throughout the State designed to cover all 16 counties. The bill directs DHHS, through independent housing services under its administration of assisted housing programs, to coordinate, arrange or provide services including job training and health care services for residents of transitional housing communities. The bill also provides one-time funding MaineHousing to create transitional housing communities and funding to the department to provide independent housing services to residents of transitional housing.
LD 1864	Rep. James Boyle	An Act to Increase Maine's Housing Supply by Prohibiting Certain Zoning Requirements in Areas Where Public Sewer and Water Infrastructure Are Available and in Designated Growth Areas	Public Hearing on 5/19; Work Session 5/26; Work Session 1/12 – Housing Committee	This bill provides restrictions on municipal ordinance requirements related to minimum lot size in areas where water and sewer infrastructure are available and in areas where water and sewer infrastructure are not available but that are within designated growth areas. For a housing development served by a public, special district or other centrally managed water system and a public, special district or other comparable sewer system and that is located in an area in which dwelling units are allowed, a municipality must allow a dwelling unit on a lot with a minimum size of 5,000 square feet. For a housing development located in a

				designated growth area that is not served by a public, special district or other centrally managed water system and a public, special district or other comparable sewer system, that complies with minimum lot size requirements in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, chapter 423-A and that is located in an area in which dwelling units are allowed, a municipality must allow a dwelling unit on a lot with a minimum size of 20,000 square feet. The bill also provides limits to ordinance provisions relating to lot coverage, road frontage and setback requirements.
LD 1867	Rep. Grayson Lookner	An Act to Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority	Public Hearing on 5/19; Work Session 5/26, Work Session 1/9 – Housing Committee	This bill establishes the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority within the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority to develop, own, lease and maintain mixed-income, permanently affordable public residential housing in this State.
LD 1904	Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross	An Act to Enact the Fair Chance Housing Act	Public Hearing on 5/15; Work Session 5/24 – Judiciary Committee – Tabled – Carried over	This bill establishes the Maine Fair Chance Housing Act, the purpose of which is to ensure that a person is not denied housing based solely on the existence of a history of criminal convictions. This bill prohibits a housing provider from considering an applicant's criminal history until after the housing provider determines that the applicant meets all other qualifications for tenancy. A person who is aggrieved by a violation of the Maine Fair Chance Housing Act by a housing provider may file a grievance with the Maine Human Rights Commission and, if it is a violation by a private housing provider, may bring a civil action in court.
LR 2752	Sen. M Daughtry	An Act to Create Workforce Housing to Promote Economic Development in Maine	PASSED Legislative Council Appeal	
LR 2772	Sen. M Rotundo	An Act to Accelerate the Production of Housing and Strengthen the Maine Historic Property Rehabilitation Tax Credit	PASSED Legislative Council	
LR 2938	Rep. C Golek	An Act to Improve the Housing Voucher System	PASSED Legislative Council Appeal	

GENERAL ASSISTANCE & SAFETY NET BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 1426	Rep. Kristi Mathieson	An Act to Secure Housing for the Most Vulnerable Maine Residents by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal General Assistance	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carried over	This bill: 1. Requires an overseer, no later than the 120th day following appointment or election, to complete training on the requirements of the municipal general assistance program; 2. Replaces, for determining the maximum level of assistance, the fair market value determination with setting the assistance at the equivalent amount of rental assistance provided for tenant-based housing choice vouchers under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 except that the benefit level may not be less than the difference between the applicant's income and 110% of the area's fair market rent;

				<p>3. Provides that if general assistance is being used to pay rent for an applicant whose rent is subject to a lease an overseer may redetermine the applicant's eligibility annually;</p> <p>4. Increases from 70% to 90% the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by a municipality and each Indian tribe;</p> <p>5. Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to reimburse each municipality for 5% of the direct costs of paying benefits incurred through its general assistance program;</p> <p>6. Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to establish and provide overseers with access to a statewide database for tracking applicants for the general assistance program and expenses relating to the program; and</p> <p>7. Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide assistance to municipalities with regard to processing applications for the general assistance program and directs the department to establish a hotline that is available 24 hours per day in order to provide consistent, accurate advice to overseers. It also requires the department to respond to requests for assistance within 24 hours</p>
LD 1664	Sen. Marianne Moore	An Act to Increase Reimbursement Under the General Assistance Program	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill increases, from 70% to 90%, the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by each municipality and Indian tribe.
LD 1675	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the General Assistance Program Regarding Eligibility, Housing Assistance and State Reimbursement and to Establish a Working Group	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carried over	This bill amends the law governing the General Assistance (GA) program to provide that a municipality must calculate housing assistance equivalent to the amount of rental assistance provided for tenant-based housing choice vouchers under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937. The bill extends the period of eligibility from one month to 6 months. Beginning July 1, 2023, when a municipality incurs net general assistance costs in excess of 0.008% of that municipality's most recent state valuation relative to the state fiscal year for which reimbursement is being issued, DHHS must reimburse the municipality for 90% of the amount in excess of these expenditures. The bill also directs the department to establish a working group to study and make recommendations related to a uniform intake process and the conversion of the GA program into a housing assistance program.
LD 1732	Rep. Michele Meyer	An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carried over	<p>This bill changes the municipal general assistance program in the following ways:</p> <p>1. It requires overseers and designated or appointed municipal officials administering the program to complete training within 120 days of election or appointment;</p>

				<p>2. It requires municipalities to accept applications for general assistance during regular business hours;</p> <p>3. It amends provisions governing the municipality of responsibility to increase the provision of assistance from 30 days to 6 months when a municipality assists an applicant in relocating to another community and from 6 months to 12 months when an applicant is residing in a group home, shelter, rehabilitation center, nursing home or hospital or in a hotel, motel or other temporary housing;</p> <p>4. It increases, from 70% to 90%, the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by each municipality and Indian tribe. It also provides that, if a municipality elects to determine need without consideration of funds from a municipally controlled trust, the State is required to reimburse the municipality for 66 2/3% of the amount in excess of expenditures;</p> <p>5. It provides state reimbursement for additional program costs, including emergency general assistance, temporary housing, interpreter services and administrative expenses; and</p> <p>6. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide the services necessary to support municipalities, including education and training for certain state employees, 24-hour technical assistance, written decisions and a database.</p>
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FOOD SECURITY BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 568	Rep. Matthew Pouliot	An Act to Provide Funding for the State Fund to Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives	Passed to be Enacted in the House and Senate. Placed on the Special Appropriations Table – Carried over	This bill provides ongoing General Fund appropriations of \$600,000 to the Fund To Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The bill also removes the \$50,000 limit on matching contributions from the fund criteria.
LD 1584	Rep. Holly Stover	An Act to Provide Funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to Temporarily Restore Benefits Being Reduced by the Federal Government	Passed to be Enacted in the House and Senate. Placed on the Special Appropriations Table – Carried over	<p>Under the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the Federal Government provided emergency benefit allotments under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. These emergency benefit allotments are scheduled to expire March 1, 2023.</p> <p>This bill extends for 6 months, but on a decreasing basis, the amount of benefits available under SNAP by providing General Fund funds to provide the following level of benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In March 2023, 100% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; 2. In April 2023, 75% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; 3. In May 2023, 50% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; and 4. From June through August 2023, 25% of the federal emergency benefit allotment.

				Beginning in September 2023, an additional amount is not provided.
LD 1940	Sen. Craig Hickman	An Act to Promote Consistent Policies within Growth Management Programs in Order to Increase Food Security and Economic Resiliency in Local Communities	Public Hearing on 1/9 at 1pm – Housing Committee	This bill amends the laws governing planning and land use regulation to encourage: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Municipalities to ensure that the language and requirements in charters, policies, codes, regulations, bylaws and fees align with each other and meet the overall intent of the comprehensive plan approved by the legislative body; 2. Municipalities to develop policies that assess community needs and environmental, food security and economic resiliency effects of municipal regulations, lessen the effect of excessive parking requirements for buildings in downtowns and on main streets and provide for alternative approaches for compliance relating to the reuse of upper floors of buildings in downtowns and on main streets; and 3. In the development of affordable housing, municipalities and multimunicipal regions to establish policies that assess food security and economic resiliency effects of municipal regulations.
LD 2037	DHHS Bill	An Act to Align the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program with Federal Regulations	Public Hearing 1/9 at 1pm – HHS Committee	This bill amends the law governing the denial of food assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, as a result of lottery and gambling winnings. The bill provides that gross lottery and gambling winnings equal to or greater than the maximum allowable financial resource limit for elderly or disabled households, as provided in federal SNAP regulations, disqualifies a household from receiving food assistance through SNAP.